



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Children's Bureau

Child and Family Services Reviews Final Assessment

Kansas

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**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
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Child and Family Services Review

Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services Child and Family Policy Division

Introduction

Pursuant to section 1123(A) of the Social Security Act and 45 CFR 1355.31 through 1355.37, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, through the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), is charged with the responsibility for reviewing federally-funded child and family services programs to determine the States' substantial conformity with State plan requirements and other requirements under Titles IV-B and IV-E of the Act.

The child and family services reviews, authorized by the 1994 amendments to the Social Security Act (SSA) and administered by the Children's Bureau, provide a unique opportunity for the Federal government and State child welfare agencies to work as a team in assessing the State's capacity to promote positive outcomes for children and families engaged in the child welfare system.

Kansas was the twelfth State in the country to participate in the Child and Family Services Review. The review process consisted of two phases. The first phase consisted of a State Data Profile, derived from data for FFY 1999 contained in the Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) and for CY 1999 from the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS), and data provided by the State for State FY 2000. This profile highlighted key performance indicators relating to safety and permanency for children coming into the child welfare system. Using this profile and other sources of information, Kansas completed a Statewide Assessment, which described the process, procedures, and policies of their child welfare system, including foster care and adoption. This assessment also focused on the systemic factors in place, which enable the State to carry out the process, procedures and policies of the program.

The second phase of the process involved an on-site review the week of August 6, 2001. The purpose of the on-site review included an examination of a sample of 50 cases for outcome achievement and interviews with community stakeholders to evaluate the systemic factors under review. The cases reviewed on-site examined child-specific performance indicators that correspond to certain statewide aggregate data. Other performance indicators reviewed on-site could not be reported in aggregate form through databases, therefore the on-site review was the only source of information for those indicators. Through a combination of aggregate data reported on the statewide assessment and case-specific information gathered on-site, the review team was able to evaluate

outcome achievement within programs and to identify areas where technical assistance is needed to make improvements.

The on-site review was conducted in three sites in the State of Kansas: Wyandotte County (Kansas City, Kansas), Sedgwick County (Wichita, Kansas), and Montgomery County (Independence, Kansas). The period under review was April 1, 2000 – through August 10, 2001. A random sample of 50 cases, evenly distributed between in-home and out-of-home care cases, was examined for the period under review.

Forty-eight State and Federal reviewers and team leaders, operating in two-person (State/Federal) teams, reviewed and rated the services provided to children and their families, in relationship to three domains: safety, permanency and well-being. These ratings were derived from documentation in the case records as well as from interviews with those involved with cases, i.e., parents, caseworkers, service providers, advocates, court personnel, foster parents, law enforcement, children, etc.

There were also interviews with stakeholders that allowed for an independent examination of the systemic factors to determine how well they function in the State. The systemic factors included: statewide information system, case review system, quality assurance system, staff training, service array, agency responsiveness to community, and foster and adoptive parent licensing, recruitment, and retention.

The results of the Statewide Assessment, the on-site case review, and the stakeholder interviews were compiled by the review team into this report and were used to make a determination about Kansas' substantial conformity with regard to each of the seven outcomes related to safety, permanency and well-being, and each of the systemic factors. In order to be determined to be in substantial conformity on any given outcome, the outcome must have been substantially achieved in 90% of the cases reviewed.

Executive Summary

Key Findings Relating to Safety, Permanency and Well-Being

I. Safety

- **87% of the cases reviewed substantially achieved Safety Outcome 1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.**

Strengths -

Information from the on-site review revealed that investigations were generally initiated in a timely manner. Face-to-face contacts with children were routinely made within timeframes outlined in policy. Safety plans were implemented and risk was being managed through varied interventions.

Incidents of repeat maltreatment were minimal, which may be due in part to the delivery of Family Preservation Services. The provision of after care services by the foster care contractors may also have a positive impact in this area.

It was indicated in the cases that were reviewed that Family Preservation Services have been effective in addressing the needs of children and families at risk of removal and in keeping children out of care.

Case decisions around reintegration into the home appeared to be based on an assessment of risk in the family.

Allegations were investigated and corrective action plans were developed in situations where abuse or neglect was identified in foster or adoptive homes.

Challenges –

Although initial safety assessments were being completed, underlying issues were not always being identified and appropriate services being provided.

The State has a policy that a supervisor, without knowledge of the case, is to review any cases in which there have been three unsubstantiated reports of abuse or neglect in the past two years. It was determined during the review that this was not occurring in all cases that were reviewed.

Status of Safety Outcome 1: Not in Substantial Conformity

- **90% of the cases reviewed substantially achieved Safety Outcome 2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.**

Strengths -

The on-site review indicated that Family Based Assessments were being completed with parental involvement. Family Preservation was being provided to protect children and prevent removal from the home. Family Preservation and Social and Rehabilitation (SRS) staff generally began provision of services quickly. Stakeholders identified a promising pilot project that utilizes software to complete the Kansas Initiative Decision Support (KIDS) form to determine if a case should be assigned to Family Preservation or SRS staff.

Challenges –

Stakeholders and case reviews indicated that Family Preservation was the primary mode of service delivery in many cases where more intensive long-range services were warranted. Some sites identified a need for additional service delivery options to reduce risk of harm.

In several cases there were insufficient services to address the needs of Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED) children. There were concerns relative to the adequacy of training to identify services needed for this group of children.

Status of Safety Outcome 2: In Substantial Conformity

II. Permanency

- **68% of cases reviewed substantially achieved Permanency Outcome 1: Children will have permanency and stability in their living situations.**

Strengths -

A real strength in the area of permanency is that children were not experiencing foster care re-entry. After care services were seen as very effective in stabilizing the placement back into the home and having a positive impact in this area.

Case reviews indicated that the use of flex funds also had a positive impact on children being maintained in their own homes. Where there were sufficient resources in the community the children experienced fewer moves. There are efforts to maintain children in the least restrictive out-of-home placement.

There was consensus that Termination of Parental Rights (TPR) petitions are being filed for children in care 15 of 22 months. Permanency plans for most children were being established through court reviews that exceeded the

required yearly permanency hearing. In most cases the case planning conferences were occurring at least every six months. Connections with relatives were supported and maintained.

Challenges –

While Kansas has seen an increase in the number of foster homes available over the past few years, there was an identified need for more homes, particularly to meet the specialized needs of children with severe emotional disturbances.

There were indications that some children have experienced multiple placements in a short period of time. There were instances where the placement changes were not a result of case plan goal achievement. There were instances in which children had experienced 10-14 placement changes during the period under review, due to the lack of appropriate placement resources and an adequate assessment of their placement needs.

Stakeholders indicated that there is a lack of sufficient supports for foster parents, particularly for respite care in the home community. There were also indications that foster parents are not always given adequate information when children are placed.

Case reviews and stakeholder interviews identified a need for ongoing assessments of appropriate goals for children. A number of cases had goals for the child or youth that were clearly not appropriate and services and the goals did not match. In some cases older children had a goal of adoption for several years, yet the child had clearly stated on numerous occasions that they did not want to be adopted.

Stakeholders indicated that Kansas is in the first phases of implementing a concurrent planning model. This will address some of the identified lags in movement towards permanency. Hence planning is sequentially in most instances and is sometimes negatively impacted by transition between contract agencies as goals change, i.e., goal change to adoption.

Stakeholders indicated that independent living services are not available in all areas. There are concerns that children are aging out of the child welfare system without the necessary life skills training. It was indicated that some foster parents are not receiving the independent living training that is needed to help them work with older youth.

Status of Permanency Outcome 1: Not in Substantial Conformity

- ***80% of the cases reviewed substantially achieved Permanency Outcome 2: the continuity of family relationships and connections will be preserved for children.***

Strengths -

According to case reviews and stakeholders, Kansas made efforts to maintain emotionally supportive relationships in most cases between parent and child, where appropriate. There was evidence that extra efforts were made to bring the parents into the life of the child in school and in other relevant areas.

Case reviews and stakeholders indicated that most children appear to be placed within close proximity to families. Kansas encourages and facilitates frequent visits between child/parent and child/siblings in foster care. Other methods of contact are also encouraged. In some instances foster parents were instrumental in maintaining connections.

Case reviews and stakeholder interviews indicated that the policy for visitation was being followed for the majority of cases and that the agency encouraged and facilitated frequent visitation between child/parent and child/siblings in foster care.

Case reviews and stakeholders indicated that there is support for seeking relative placements and that these are routinely explored. Case reviews indicated that if relatives were not used as a placement option, the rationale was appropriately documented. Visitation with grandparents and other relatives was being facilitated.

According to stakeholders, Kansas is responsive to the Tribes and gives notice when Native American children are placed in care. It was indicated that there is a timely transitioning of cases to the Tribes. Tribal representatives are always at the table during case planning. Stakeholders did indicate that services are not always oriented to the Native American population.

Challenges –

Stakeholders indicated that specialized contracts can be a barrier to effective concurrent planning.

According to stakeholders, some workers and youth are not aware that independent living services can be used for children 18 years of age and over. Transitional planning was not always occurring for children with special needs to prepare them to live independently.

Status of Permanency Outcome 2: Not in Substantial Conformity

III. Child and Family Well-Being

- **77% of the cases reviewed substantially achieved Well-Being Outcome 1: Families will have enhanced capacity to provide for their child's needs.**

Strengths -

Case reviews indicated that thorough assessments are being completed and in most cases the major needs of parents, children and foster parents are addressed through appropriate services. In some cases extra efforts were being made to provide services that were outside the normal array of services for the identified problems. According to stakeholders, Kansas has developed a Child Well-Being status report that is completed every 6 months to coincide with the case planning conference and tracks service needs and progress.

Parental and child involvement in case planning is a real strength of the Kansas child welfare system. Stakeholders indicated that SRS, contract staff, Tribes and parents are consistently involved in the process.

Case reviews indicated that in many instances workers were consistently meeting or exceeding visitation requirements with the child and that visitation schedules were based on the needs and goals of the child.

Challenges -

Stakeholders expressed concern about the level of support provided to some foster parents by their worker and the children's worker.

Stakeholders did identify that there is a lack of intensive long-range services for children who were identified as Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED) and had substance abuse and/or mental health issues. In some instances there were waiting lists for some mental health and substance abuse services due to limited availability. In some instances the continuity of services was hampered by the contractual arrangement with the state. Stakeholders indicated that services to parents were not always being provided as identified. The focus, at times, tended to be on treatment for the child while excluding the parent's issues. Family focused services were sometimes lacking.

Status of Well-Being Outcome 1: Not in Substantial Conformity

- **93% of the cases reviewed substantially achieved Well-Being Outcome 2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.**

Strengths –

Case reviews indicated that educational needs of children were being addressed and that services were being provided to address the identified needs.

Kansas SRS is collaborating with the Department of Education to address issues around the movement of children between schools and the development of an educational “passport: to follow the child. A form has been developed to capture information about the child’s educational and social needs, school placement that is given to the school when a child is enrolling in or transferring schools.

Stakeholders stated that Kansas utilizes Early Child Care and Head Start in their educational and developmental services to children.

Challenges –

There is not a process in place that ensures that an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is implemented when a parent refuses to sign and the worker is not authorized to do so.

In some instances children experienced multiple school placements due to multiple changes in out-of-home placements.

Status of Well-Being 2: In Substantial Conformity

- **78% of cases reviewed substantially achieved Well-Being 3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.**

Strengths –

Case reviews and stakeholder interviews indicated that in the majority of cases children’s physical health needs were being met. There was follow up on identified medical needs.

Case reviews indicated that in most cases overall basic mental health needs were identified as soon as a child came into care through mental health screenings and evaluations.

SRS is working with mental health and contract partners to design a more effective system for delivering mental health services. There is a plan for Seriously Emotionally Disturbed (SED) children to be “carved out” of the current system beginning October 1, 2001. The remaining mental health services will be rolled out beginning January 2002.

Challenges –

Stakeholders stated that there are insufficient numbers of dental care providers that accept Medicaid, especially for orthodontia care.

In some instances foster parents are not provided with medical information on children placed in their care in a timely manner or not at all. The mechanism for foster parents to claim reimbursement for travel to take children for medical care was reported to be cumbersome and did not support timely reimbursements.

Stakeholders and case reviews identified the need for improvement in the provision of mental health services to children and families. While mental health evaluations were being completed for children, follow up treatment or the specialized services needed were not always provided. There were waiting lists for specialized services. Especially challenging were the children with severe emotional disturbances, described as 1-2% of the children served.

Stakeholders indicated that the duration, level, and intensity of appropriate mental health services are not being provided. These were the most costly services and were not being authorized thereby resulting in unstable placements, children remaining in care for extended periods of time and placement of children in restrictive placements.

Status of Outcome Well-Being 3: Not in Substantial Conformity

Key Findings for Systemic Factors

I. Statewide Information System

Strengths -

Kansas is operating a data rich statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for placement of every child who is in foster care. The system also has the capacity to identify children served by child protective services, SRS family services and contracted family preservation.

Challenges –

The statewide information system Family and Child Tracking System (FACTS) is fragmented and does not provide readily accessible management reports that

assist the managers and workers. In many instances workers and contractors are maintaining their own databases for management purposes that are not coordinated with or able to exchange information with the FACT system.

Status of Statewide Information System: In Substantial Conformity

II. Case Review System

Strengths –

Case review and stakeholders indicated that parents are invited and attend case planning meetings. Generally contract and SRS workers attended and participated in these meetings.

Case reviews and stakeholders indicated that the courts are meeting and exceeding the 6-month requirement for case reviews. The Kansas Supreme Court was instrumental in promoting the standardization of court orders to ensure compliance with AFSA and IV-E. Permanency hearings are being conducted timely prior to Termination of Parental Rights occurring. Courts are conscientious about filing TPR petitions when a child has been in care 15 of 22 months.

According to stakeholders, foster parents are invited to hearings and they provide the court written reports prior to the court hearings.

Challenges –

Case reviews and stakeholder interviews in one review site indicated that permanency hearings are not usually held for children whose parental rights have been terminated. These are primarily a paper reviews.

Status of Case Review System: In Substantial Conformity

III. Quality Assurance System

Strengths –

Stakeholder interviews and case reviews revealed that policy is in place to ensure that children are receiving quality services

Stakeholder interviews indicated that KDHE has policy/regulations regarding foster home licensing and child/placing/caring agencies and are responsible for licensing each of these entities. Criminal background and child abuse checks on foster homes are completed prior to initial licensure and yearly thereafter. There

is a process in place to address complaints and develop corrective action plans targeted at identified problem areas.

Kansas is in the process of developing a comprehensive quality assurance process that addresses duplication and is more efficient. Plans are being developed to incorporate elements of the CFS process into their quality assurance system.

Challenges –

The on-site review confirmed findings in the statewide assessment that the current quality assurance system is fragmented and duplicative.

Status of Quality Assurance System: In Substantial Conformity

IV. Training

Strengths –

Stakeholders and case reviews indicated that Kansas has hired an Education and Training Program Administrator for development, coordination, and implementation of statewide training for SRS and contract staff at all levels. This position will also serve as the agency's coordinator for foster parent training issues. Kansas is also in the process of expanding initial and ongoing training for the SRS workers through a comprehensive statewide training academy. Stakeholder interviews indicated that prospective foster/adoptive parents are receiving MAPP or "Deciding Together" training prior to initial licensure. Therapeutic homes are required to have 40 hours of specialized training every year. There are a variety of opportunities available for foster parents to receive their yearly in-service training.

Challenges –

Stakeholders indicated that there is not a comprehensive system for training which focuses on the needs of child welfare workers from entry level to advanced workers and supervisors. Training is often fragmented. Training on concurrent planning was identified as a need.

Stakeholders indicated that training is not always available at times and places convenient for foster parents. Foster parents do not always receive training for special needs children, i.e., independent living, adolescents, and SED.

Status of Training: Not in Substantial Conformity

V. Service Array

Strengths –

Stakeholders and case reviews indicated that there is a wide array of available services. Some areas of Kansas are rich in services. Family preservation and adoption services are available throughout the State. Some mental health services are available through Community Health Centers throughout the State. Services are generally individualized to meet the needs of children and families.

Challenges –

Stakeholders and case reviews indicated that drug and alcohol treatment services are needed in some areas. Specialized mental health services are not readily available, i.e., crisis bed, attendant care, and respite care.

Stakeholders indicated that independent living services are not available in all areas.

Status of Service Array: In Substantial Conformity

VI. Agency responsiveness to the Community

Strengths –

Stakeholders talked about the new leadership, vision and openness to collaboration they see within the system. SRS is held in high regard in the community. SRS works collaboratively with a wide variety of community partners. Stakeholders indicated that SRS reaches out to the Tribes to include them in decision making and plan development. Government to Government meetings with Tribal representative are held regularly.

Challenges –

Stakeholders indicated that staff needs assistance in working with different cultures, although staff has received some training in this area. There is limited diversity of staff in mental health service providers, contract agencies, and SRS to work with the diverse client population.

Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community: In Substantial Conformity.

VII. Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention

Strengths –

Stakeholder interviews indicated that Kansas' licensing standards reflect national standards and promote protection and permanency for children in out-of-home care. These standards are equally applied to all licensed/approved homes and child care institutions.

Stakeholders indicated that Kansas has significantly increased the pool of foster homes. The "Coming Home Kansas" initiative is a major effort to recruit foster/adoptive homes.

Challenges –

Stakeholders indicated that there is a shortage of foster/adoptive homes for adolescents, large sibling groups, and children with special needs. Support and training are not always readily available for foster parents who are caring for this group of children. Kansas has not consistently engaged in targeted recruitment for the varied population of children that present placement challenges. On the surface it appears that there are sufficient homes to place children, however these placements do not necessarily address the special needs of children in care.

Stakeholders indicated that SRS managers have little knowledge of recruitment activities that are taking place in their areas or throughout the State.

Status of Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention: In Substantial Conformity

REVIEW RESULTS

Outcome	Number of Cases Substantially Achieved	Number of Cases Partially Achieved	Number of Cases Not Achieved	Percentage of Cases Substantially Achieved
<u>Outcome S1:</u> Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.	41	4	2	87%
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.	43	4	1	90%
Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.	17	5	3	68%
Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.	20	5	0	80%
Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.	38	9	3	76%
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	41	1	2	93%
Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.	36	10	0	78%

Systemic Factors	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1 (None of the State Plan or program requirements is in place.)	2 (Some or all of the State plan or program requirements are in place, but more than one of the requirements fails to function at the level described)	3 (All of the State plan or program requirements are in place, and no more than one of the requirements fails to function as described in each requirement)	4 (All of the State plan or program requirements are in place and functioning as described in each requirement)
Statewide Information System			XXX	
Case Review System			XXX	
Quality Assurance System			XXX	
Training		XXX		
Service Array			XXX	
Agency Responsiveness To The Community				XXX
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention			XXX	

AREAS OF SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMITY

Outcome	Number of Cases Substantially Achieved	Number of Cases Partially Achieved	Number of Cases Not Achieved	Percentage of Cases Substantially Achieved
Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their own homes whenever possible and appropriate.	43	4	1	90%
Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.	41	1	2	93%

Systemic Factors	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1 (None of the State Plan or program requirements is in place.)	2 (Some or all of the State plan or program requirements are in place, but more than one of the requirements fails to function at the level described)	3 All of the State plan or program requirements are in place, and no more than one of the requirements fails to function as described in each requirement)	4 All of the State plan or program requirements are in place and functioning as described in each requirement)
Statewide Information System			XXX	
Case Review System			XXX	
Quality Assurance System			XXX	
Service Array			XXX	
Agency Responsiveness To The Community				XXX
Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment and Retention			XXX	

I. SAFETY

Outcome S1: Children are, first and foremost, protected from abuse and neglect.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:					
Total Cases Reviewed: 50		Total Cases to Which Outcome Applies: 47			
	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	18	14	9	41	87%
Partially Achieved:	0	2	2	4	9%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	2	0	2	4%
Not Applicable:	1	1	1	3	
Conformity of Statewide data indicators with national standards:					
	National Standard	State's Percentage	Meets Standard	Does Not Meet Standard	
Repeat maltreatment	6.1%	3.22	X		
Maltreatment of children in foster care	.57%	1.55		X	

Item 1. Timeliness of initiating investigations of reports of child maltreatment

 x Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

According to SRS policy the process of receiving and recording information by a person not authorized to screen or accept the information as a report is considered "reception." The intake process begins only when an SRS supervisor or designee receives an allegation or a suspicion that a child may be a child in need of care or other services that requires a screening decision. Intake ends with the SRS supervisor's (or designee's) decision to either screen out the concern or accept it as a report for further assessment.

SRS policy indicated that reports accepted for case assignment by the Child Protection Center shall be transmitted to the appropriate SRS office with 2 hours. When the report is accepted and the office is not opened for business, the response time shall begin when the office is next open for business.

According to SRS policy the basis for screening out any report must be documented on form CFS-1001 and shall address each of the allegations in the report and the reasons the report was not accepted. Reports are not accepted if they do not meet the statutory definition of Child in Need of Care (CINC) or Policy and Procedure Manual (PPM) definition of Abuse or Neglect.

It is the responsibility of the assigned area office to notify appropriate parties of reports involving Native American Children.

The supervisor or designee sets the priority for beginning the Family Based Assessment according to the following:

- Same Day – serious injury or in immediate serious danger. This includes sexual abuse. Reports accepted by the Protection Report Center shall be transmitted within 2 hours of receipt.
- 72 hours – Allegation or suspicion of abuse or neglect not assigned a same day response. Safety must be ascertained within 72 hours.

Exceptions to the initiation of investigations are allowed when safety and best interests of the child are involved. Joint investigations are mandated by statute (KSA 38.1523) when a report alleges: serious physical abuse, or sexual abuse and action is required to protect a child.

Investigations and assessment are mutually dependent parts of child protection. The investigation comprises the fact-finding activities on which the assessment is based.

Response time begins with the time of the assignment and ends when the department has determined the safety of the child or a good faith effort to make such a determination. A case finding shall be made within 25 working days from the date the report was accepted for assessment, unless a delay is requested by designated professionals.

SRS policy stipulates that reports of abuse/neglect of children residing in an institution operated by the Secretary of SRS

or children residing in an institution operated by the Commissioner of JJA shall be referred to the Office of the Attorney General for investigation.

The statewide assessment indicates that factors that influence decision making regarding disposition of reports are: unique facts of each report; policy guidance on decision making; the burden of proof required and variations in community values and the effect of rulings resulting from appeals.

Basis: Onsite Review

Strengths

- Case reviews indicated that investigations were initiated within State time frames.
- Case reviews indicated that face to face contacts were made consistent with priority levels assigned to reports.
- According to stakeholder interviews, SRS has in place in at least one site under review an exemplary practice of law enforcement being teamed with SRS staff to complete investigations of child abuse/neglect.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that in one site under review there is a child advocacy center that responds to reports of sexual abuse in a multi-disciplinary approach to interviewing victims. Included are law enforcement, SRS, mental health and the district attorney.

Areas Needing Improvement

Timely assignment of reports to investigative worker

- Case reviews revealed that the lag time in assignment from receipt of reports to the assignment to the investigative worker was beyond State timeframes in some cases. For example, in one case there was an 8-day lapse from receipt of the report to assignment to investigative staff.

Item 2. Repeat maltreatment

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

SRS does not report aggregate data on subsequent maltreatment as the agency believes this information does not assist in policy development. The investigating worker is required to look up the outcomes of prior reports upon receiving any report. Repeat maltreatment is addressed in the assessment of the current safety and future risk.

SRS policy requires that when there are three or more unsubstantiated reports within two years the case must be reviewed by a supervisor not involved in the findings.

Statewide aggregate data reflects that 118 (3.22%) of 3,669 children experienced a repeat incident of maltreatment. This data element is in substantial conformance as the national standard is 6.1%.

The investigations of child abuse or neglect in licensed facilities and homes are conducted by SRS in coordination with KDHE. According to the statewide assessment, at times both SRS and KDHE field staff are confused about their roles in the investigative process. Investigations do take place and child safety is paramount with the staff from both agencies.

SRS identified several issues in the statewide assessment that surrounds this agency's ability to ensure the safety of children in foster care. Key among them is the issue of high staff turnover at foster care facilities, which is impacted by the difficulty of dealing with children who have high needs. The statewide assessment indicates a need for a more comprehensive training program. It was also indicated that ongoing support is key to retaining capable foster parents.

The national standard for the element, maltreatment of children in foster care, is .57%. Kansas aggregate data reflect that 118 (1.55 %) of 7,609 children experienced an incident of maltreatment while in foster care. Kansas is not in substantial conformance with this element.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Case reviews revealed that repeat reports of maltreatment during the review period were minimal. This may be in part attributed to the Family Preservation Services contracts that states the providers are responsible for the provision of services for 12 months following the referral date.
- Case reviews revealed that assessments of risk appeared to be appropriate. Family Preservation Services were utilized in cases where there did not appear to be imminent risk of removal. However, services provided helped to stabilize families and reduce risk.

Areas Needing Improvement

Agency policy is not always followed relative to requiring the review of 3 or more unsubstantiated reports in a 2-year period by an uninvolved supervisor

- The policy requiring a review of cases in which there are 3 or more unsubstantiated reports in a 2-year period is good practice and should be followed in all instances. The case reviews found several cases in which this practice was not followed.

Safety of children in out of home placements

- Case reviews revealed that there were several instances of maltreatment of children while placed in foster homes.

Status of Safety Outcome S1- Not in Substantial Conformity

Of the cases reviewed, 87% substantially achieved Safety Outcome S1. The data profiles for the state indicated that the State was in compliance with the National Standard for repeat maltreatment. The case reviews supported these findings documenting that of the 45 cases being ranked for this item, 43 cases were ranked as a strength.

Outcome S2: Children are safely maintained in their homes whenever possible and appropriate.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:					
Total Cases Reviewed: 50			Total Cases to Which Outcome Applies: 48		
	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	17	16	10	43	90%
Partially Achieved:	1	2	1	4	8%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	1	0	1	2%
Not Applicable:	1	0	1	2	

Item 3. Services to family to protect child (ren) in home and prevent removal

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

SRS policy stipulates that a Family Based Assessment (FBA) is the method used for the purpose of identifying those services necessary to keep families intact, determine the necessity for a placement, and/or to reunite them. FBAs are required for all cases accepted for services. Exceptions include those cases involving an alleged or suspected “third party” person responsible for the maltreatment or cases in which the maltreatment occurred in a facility subject to KDHE regulations.

SRS policy provides that a case may be closed if there is not substantial risk of harm, if the family is seeking services on their own, or is already receiving services from a community agency. According to the statewide assessment Department policy encourages the use of community resources rather than state services whenever there is not a compelling state interest for intervention. This may account for smaller percentages of cases being opened.

State policy provides for a report to a county/district attorney in all cases where a child appears to be in need of care and the authority of the court appears necessary to protect the child.

Family preservation is one of the strengths of the Kansas child welfare program. This program strives to ensure the family is stable and services are in place before closing the case. Family preservation services are frequently utilized for families experiencing isolated abuse/neglect incidents, families that have concrete needs or where there is parental incapacitation. SRS staff also use family preservation services to serve as ‘an extra pair of eyes on a case’ to ensure a family does not have underlying issues of child endangerment undetected during an investigation.

The Family Preservation contract provides a full range of comprehensive services to build on family strengths and address family needs. The contractor is responsible for the development of a case plan with the family, which is then, submitted SRS with 20 days of initial contact with the family.

A small number of cases were “opened for services” compared to the number of cases in which a child abuse/neglect finding was made. Of 18, 974 reports in which a finding was made in 1999, only 28.8% of those cases were opened for services. The aforementioned policy may account for this practice.

Basis: On-Site Reviews

Strengths

- Case reviews revealed that Family Based Assessments were being completed with parental involvement.
- Case reviews revealed that Family Preservation Services were being provided to protect children in the home and prevent removal.
- Stakeholder interviews in one review site indicated that the community knows how to access mental health services.
- Stakeholders identified the KIDS (Kansas Initiative to Determine Services) tool as being valuable in completing the assessment and determining the need for removal of children from the home.
- Case reviews revealed that safety plans were completed as part of the assessment process.

Areas Needing Improvement

Provision of more intensive long-range services

- Family Preservation is the primary mode of providing services to intact families. During the case review, cases were identified in which more intensive long range services were warranted as opposed to the short-term Family Preservation.

Assessment process

- Case reviews revealed that assessments completed in one site tended to focus on the presenting problems but did not always address some of the underlying issues.

Provision of services for Severely Emotionally Disturbed children

- Case reviews revealed that sufficient services were not available to address the identified needs of SED children. This was confirmed through stakeholder interviews. Stakeholders expressed concerns about the adequacy of training in the identification of appropriate services needed by SED children.

Item 4. Risk of harm to child

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

The data profiles reflect a decrease in the number of reports from 1997 to 1998. This may be due in part to the move towards privatization in 1996. In addition, it is believed that the data for 1997 and possibly 1998 reflects difficulties in transition from previous systems to the current FACTS system. This transition occurred in 1997. The numbers increased in 1999.

The data profiles also reflect that of the 2, 433 cases opened for services that 16.7% of those children were determined children in need of care and were subsequently placed in foster care.

The statewide assessment indicates that increases and decreases in the numbers coming into custody and out of home placement raise questions as to whether the removal was appropriate. According to the statewide assessment this is best addressed by case reviews in which the adequacy of judicial findings and social services to prevent unnecessary placement are documented.

Safety Plans are developed in conjunction with the child's family and any other persons required to carry out the plan.

SRS utilizes the Structured Risk Assessment Tool (CFS 2030) as a part of the Family Based Assessment. It is required for each assigned report in which abuse or neglect is alleged or suspected. The risk assessment is sent within 2 working days of a foster care referral; or completed within 45 working days of intake assignment, whichever comes first.

Basis: On-site review

Strengths

- Safety assessments were completed timely and safety plans identified appropriate interventions to protect children.
- In one site, a team has been established to complete a Family Assessment Team (FAT) staffing before a child is removed or a petition is filed in court to determine if this is an appropriate decision. Documentation found in case files, as well as information received from stakeholders, confirmed the use of the FAT.
- Family Preservation and SRS staff generally began provision of services quickly.
- Stakeholders identified a promising pilot project that uses software to complete the KIDS form to determine if a case should be assigned to Family Preservation or SRS staff or be referred for removal of the child from the home.

Area Needing Improvement

Utilization of additional service delivery options

- Stakeholders identified a need for additional service delivery options to reduce risk of harm other than referral to Family Preservation Services.

Status of Safety Outcome S2 – In Substantial Conformity

90% of the records reviewed substantially achieved Safety Outcome S2.

II. PERMANENCY

Outcome P1: Children have permanency and stability in their living situations.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:					
Total Cases Reviewed: 50		Total Cases to Which Outcome Applies: 25			
	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	6	8	3	17	68%
Partially Achieved:	2	1	2	5	20%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	1	1	1	3	12%
Not Applicable:	10	9	6	25	

Conformity of Statewide data indicators with national standards:				
	National Standard	State's Percentage	Meets Standard	Does Not Meet Standard
Foster care re-entries	8.6%	2.43%	X	
Length of time to achieve reunification	76.2%	50.25%		X
Length of time to achieve adoption	32.0%	57.58%	X	
Stability of foster care placements	86.7%	64.20%		X
Length of stay in foster care*				

*Not used to determine substantial conformity.

Item 5. Foster care re-entries

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide assessment

Statewide aggregate data indicates that 2.43% of all children who entered care during the year re-entered foster care within 12 months of a prior foster care episode. Of these children, 91% were in their first foster care episode on both the last day of the prior year and first of that year. There was a net change of 1,815 children in foster care for the year under review. Kansas is in substantial conformance for this element.

The statewide assessment indicates that perhaps staying in out-of-home placement until family issues are resolved leads to successful reintegration and a reduction of foster care re-entries. Another factor impacting the agency's performance may be the use of Community Services Intervention funding.

Basis: On-Site Review

Strengths

- Case reviews indicated that children did not have multiple entries into out-of-home care during the review period.
- Case reviews indicated that flex-funds were being used to maintain children in their own homes. This was supported by information obtained during stakeholder interviews.

Area Needing Improvement

- None noted.

Item 6. Stability of foster care placement

☐ Strength ☒ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Of all children who have been in foster care less than 12 months from the time of the latest removal from home, 64.20% had no more than two placements. The national standard is 86.7% therefore Kansas is not in substantial compliance for this element.

Children taken into custody are placed with a parent or in a designated shelter. Shelters are considered a placement. The SA indicates that the standard does not take into account that the move (in excess of 2) may be in the best interest of the child. Circumstances of removal may require quick evaluation and placement when little information is known. Status offenders included in the foster care population often require frequent moves due to their behaviors.

SRS expresses a clear preference to contractors for children to be placed in home-like environments whenever possible and appropriate.

Lessons learned during the first 4 years of privatization of foster care resulted in inclusion in the 2000 RFP contract a provision that no less than 85% of children referred to the contractor would be placed in family foster care. It was determined that some contractors had been primarily placing children in residential or group home care and were not oriented to the recruitment, placement and support of family foster care.

Basis: On-Site Review

Strengths

- Where there were sufficient resources in the community the children experienced fewer moves. One of the review sites is resource rich, preventing children from experiencing multiple moves.
- Case reviews and stakeholder interviews revealed that there is an effort to maintain children in the least restrictive placement.

Areas Needing Improvement

Number of moves experienced by children in out-of-home placement

- Information obtained from the case reviews revealed that some children have experienced multiple placements in a short period of time. For the period under review, one child had 14 placement changes and another had 10 placement changes. The child that had 14 placements during the review period experienced 32 placements during the life of his case. None of the placements were the result of case plan goal achievement.

Development of specialized homes for SED children

- Due to the needs of children with multiple presenting problems, i.e., SED children, stakeholders identified the need for more specialized homes to accommodate these children to prevent disruptions in placement.
- Case reviews indicated that SED children who had experienced multiple moves had not been placed in specialized homes.

Matching children to placements that meet their needs

- Case reviews indicated that some children are not being placed in homes appropriate to meet their needs. This was confirmed through stakeholder interviews.

Respite care resources within the home community

- Stakeholders expressed a lack of sufficient supports for foster parents, particularly for respite care in the home community. Although this was not seen in the cases reviewed, the stakeholders identified this as a need.

Provision of information to foster parents on a timely basis

- A notebook has been developed that contains information about the child's educational, health and social history. Foster parents and workers are to update the information as necessary. The notebook is to follow the child if the child changes placements or is returned home. According to stakeholders in some of the review sites, the information is not being update or provided timely when placements are made.

- Stakeholders indicated that foster parents are not given adequate information when children are placed, i.e., medical or behavioral history.

Item 7. Permanency goal for child

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

According to SRS policy the following are permanency goals that may be established when services are initially provided:

- Maintain at Home
- Reintegration
- Adoption
- Guardianship
- Independent Living

The data profiles indicate that of the children in care 56.3% for FY '98 and 54.2% for FY'99 had a permanency goal of reunification.

See item 15 for relative placement.

See item 9 for adoption.

There have been increasing percentages of children with the permanency goal of guardianship: 1.2% in 1998 and 2.1% in 1999. The Kansas Legislature established funding for a permanent guardianship subsidy program to assist relative families. This program has been implemented statewide and procedures incorporated in policy.

Kansas does not have "long term foster care" as a goal, although the courts may order this as a goal. Although percentages are dropping the data profile shows that 2.7% of children had a permanency goal of long term foster care in 1998 and 1.2% of children in 1999.

SRS policy stipulates that concurrent planning for maintaining the child at home or reintegration and the termination of parental rights through relinquishment or court action may be initiated when in the best interest of the child and shall be initiated when court ordered.

Basis: On-Site review

Strengths

- Termination of Parental Rights petitions are being filed for children in care 15 of 22 months as confirmed through stakeholder interviews and case reviews
- Case reviews and stakeholder interviews indicated that permanency plans for most children are being established through court reviews that exceed the required yearly permanency hearings.
- Case reviews and stakeholder interviews indicated that case planning conferences are occurring at least every six months. This reports from the conferences is used to provide information to the court for review hearings that are also being conducted at least every six months.

Areas Needing Improvement

Goal setting for child

- Interviews with stakeholders and case reviews indicated that TPR is occurring in some cases where adoption is not appropriate. Some stakeholders indicated that TPR occurred too quickly for some children, thereby, creating “legal orphans” without permanent placement resources or the desire to be adopted, i.e. older children who do not wish to be adopted or children who are seriously emotionally disturbed.
- Case reviews found that identified goals were not routinely updated for the child when there was a change in the child’s circumstances, i.e. one child had a goal for adoption for 3 years when due to the child’s circumstances (and wishes) emancipation appeared to be appropriate.

Implementation of concurrent planning

- Case reviews and stakeholder interviews found that concurrent planning is not occurring where case circumstances warrant this approach. Planning is sequential in most cases and is sometimes negatively impacted by transition between contract agencies as goals change.

Court process

- One group of stakeholders indicated that children are in limbo too long. They expressed concern that court cases are frequently continued.

Item 8. Independent living services

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement ☐ Not applicable

Basis: Statewide Assessment

The percentages for children with a goal of emancipation (long term foster care) have decreased: 2.2% in 1998 and 1.9% in 1999. The statewide assessment indicates that there are five independent living coordinators and one statewide coordinator in the state. Not all youth in all areas receive sufficient and timely services. SRS is assessing how independent living services can be integrated into statewide programming.

Basis: On-Site Review

Strengths:

- Stakeholders stated that the independent living assessments are being completed.
- At one review site the stakeholders indicated that they had a good independent living worker who worked with the youth and foster parents to meet the assessed goals.

Areas needing Improvement

Availability, training and awareness of the Chafee Independent Living Program

- According to stakeholders, some workers and youth are not aware that independent living services can be accessed for children 18 years of age and over.
- The case review in one review site did not indicate that transitional planning is occurring for children with special needs to prepare them to live independently.
- According to stakeholders, Independent Living services are not available in all areas.
- Stakeholders stated that some Foster Parents are not receiving the independent living training that is needed to help them work with the older youth.

Item 9. Adoption

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Of all children served who exited care to a finalized adoption 57.58% did so in less than 24 months from the time of the latest removal from the home. This exceeds the national standard of 32.0%.

The data indicate that 16.7% of the children had a permanency goal of adoption in FY '98 and 24.4% of children had a permanency goal of adoption in FY '99. Kansas believes that the number of adoptions reported in the data profiles for 1999 is inaccurate because the State mis-coded contract agency adoptions. The statewide assessment indicates that the transition of adoption contractors resulted in the loss of timeliness for adoption finalizations.

The adoption contractor is responsible for the child's case plan implementation upon receipt of a referral, which is made by SRS within 72 hour of receipt of an approved journal entry terminating parental rights or acceptance of relinquishment.

Basis: On-Site Review

Strengths

- According to stakeholders, efforts are being made to identify resources via various adoption exchanges including the National Adoption Exchange through the “Coming Home Kansas” initiative.
- Stakeholders stated that the state has an adoption subsidy program that supports the adoptive placements for children with special needs.
- Stakeholders and case reviews indicated that adoption is identified as a goal and TPR achieved early in the permanency process, i.e. some children experienced a move to adoption within the first year of the child’s placement in out-of-home care.
- For cases reviewed in which the goal of adoption was appropriately identified, the adoption process was timely.

Areas Needing Improvement

Barriers to concurrent planning

- Stakeholders shared that the specialized contracts are a barrier to effective concurrent planning.

Goal setting

- Case reviews identified older children whose goal was adoption who did not want to be adopted. The goal of adoption for these children had been established more than two years prior to the review.

Court Process

- Stakeholders stated that the appeal process for TPR is taking up to 18 months to complete.

ICPC process

- Case reviews revealed that ICPC procedures caused delays in placing children out of state in one review site.

Adoption Subsidy Program

- Stakeholders stated that there had been a cut back in the amounts authorized for subsidy. Increasingly, Medicaid is the only service authorized for subsidized adoption.

Item 10. Permanency goal of other planned permanent living arrangement

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas incorporated the termination provisions of ASFA into the Kansas Code for Care of Children. This includes a provision that if the court finds reintegration is no longer a viable alternative, the court shall consider whether or not there are compelling reasons documented in the case plan to support a finding that neither adoption nor permanent guardianship are in the child's best interest.

Basis: On-Site Review

Strengths

- Case reviews indicated that sufficient services seemed to be provided in the 2 cases where emancipation was the goal. These children were older than 17 years of age and had input into their independent living plans. Emancipation was an appropriate goal for these children.
- Stakeholders indicated that there is a subsidized guardianship program in the state.
- Stakeholders could articulate the compelling reasons for not seeking termination of parental rights. Compelling reasons were being individualized based on the child's needs and circumstances.
- The stakeholders showed knowledge and acceptance of ASFA requirements.

Area Needing Improvement

- None noted

Status of Permanency Outcome P1 – Not in Substantial Conformity

68% of the cases reviewed substantially achieved Permanency Outcome P1. The statewide data indicators from the State Profile exceeded the national standards for foster care re-entries and length of time to achieve adoption, but did not meet the national standards for length of time to achieve reunification or stability of foster care placements.

Outcome P2: The continuity of family relationships and connections is preserved for children.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:					
Total Cases Reviewed: 50		Total Cases to Which Outcome Applied: 25			
	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	8	8	4	20	80%
Partially Achieved:	1	2	2	5	20%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0	0	0	0
Not Applicable:	10	9	6	25	

Item 11. Proximity of foster care placement

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

The case plan requires that children shall be placed in the least restrictive setting in close proximity to their own home consistent with their needs to allow for rapid reintegration.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- According to case reviews and stakeholder interviews, most children appeared to be placed within close proximity to families.
- Case reviews and stakeholder interviews indicated that efforts are being made to maintain children within the state.
- Case reviews indicated that case plan goals and the needs of the child were being considered when placing children outside their community.

Area Needing Improvement

- None noted

Item 12. Placement with siblings

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Foster homes are able to be licensed for a maximum of four foster children or six children including the provider's own children under age 16. Special approval may be given for an additional two children if necessary to keep siblings together.

A permanency outcome for contractors is that 65% of the children in foster care will be placed with one or more siblings if the siblings are also in foster care.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Case reviews showed that efforts were being made to place siblings together, including large sibling groups.

- Case reviews revealed that when siblings were separated, the agency had documented the reasons for the sibling separation.

Areas Needing Improvement

Matching of placement resource to needs of child

- Case reviews indicated that one site found that siblings were being kept together even when separate placements would best meet the individual needs of the children.

Resources for placement of siblings together

- Stakeholders indicated that there are insufficient homes to place siblings together, particularly large sibling groups.

Item 13. Visiting with parents and siblings in foster care

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

SRS policy stipulates that visitation plans shall be specified and documented. The planning of visitation should occur during the first case planning conference. The following policy applies:

- Unsupervised visitation – in person visits when reintegration is planned shall be at least once per week.
- Supervised visitation – in person visitation with whom reintegration is planned shall occur at least twice per month.
- Parent-child visitation may be limited or prohibited for therapeutic reasons or if required by court order.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- According to case reviews and stakeholder interviews, policy for visitation is being followed for the majority of cases.
- Case reviews indicated that the agency encourages and facilitates frequent visits between child/ parent and child/ siblings in foster care. Stakeholder interviews supported this.
- Case reviews revealed that other methods of contact were occurring, including phone calls.

Areas Needing Improvement

Conformity to visitation policy

- Case reviews found that policy is not always followed with regard to visitation, for example, children had been placed in separate homes in different areas. The goal was to place the children in the same adoptive placement. However, the children had only one visit in a nine-month period.

ICPC process

- Case reviews indicated ICPC issues delayed visitation in another state.

Item 14. Preserving connections

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Case planning conferences are the primary venue for assuring that connections are maintained. The child's family is assisted in attending meetings as needed. The case plan reflects services to meet the child's specific needs. The child is placed in the least restrictive setting in close proximity to their own home consistent with their needs to allow for rapid reintegration of the child safely into his/her original home.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Case records revealed that primary connections and characteristics were preserved in placements.
- According to stakeholders and case reviews, visits with grandparents and other relatives are being facilitated.
- Case reviews revealed that efforts were being made in two sites to keep children in the same schools.
- Case reviews indicated that some foster parents participated in maintaining connections, such as taking the child to his church, taking the child to school.
- Stakeholders indicated the agency makes diligent efforts to maintain connections with the tribes.

Area Needing Improvement

Preserving connections for children

- Stakeholders indicated that connections with previous foster homes are not preserved when children move to a new placement.
- Stakeholders indicate that services are not always oriented to the Native American population.

Item 15. Relative placement

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

The statewide assessment indicates that there is an expectation of the contractors to explore the feasibility of relative placement as a part of the case planning process. There is an increase in relative placements from 7.1% in FY '98 to 12.3% in FY '99.

The statewide assessment identified a need for documentation on consideration/nonconsideration of relatives as a placement option and that this is done early in the case record.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Case reviews and stakeholders indicated that there is support for seeking relative placements for children. For example, in one case, the agency assisted in locating a larger home for the relative to accommodate the placement of a large sibling group.
- Case reviews revealed that if relatives are not used as a placement option, rationale was appropriately documented.

Areas Needing Improvement

Consideration of the non-custodial parent for placement

- Stakeholders indicated that the workers were not considering the non-custodial parent for placement early in the process prior to considering other relatives.

Noted concern

- Stakeholders identified the challenge of determining the preferences in placements when working with blended families, i.e. relative placement vs. keeping siblings together.

Item 16. Relationship of child in care with parents

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement ☐ Not Applicable

Basis: Statewide Assessment

SRS visitation policy encourages the continuity of the relationship between parent and child.

The foster care contractor is responsible for making efforts to promote and maintain family relationships between parent and child.

Basis: On-site Review

Strength

- Case reviews indicated that efforts were made to maintain emotionally supportive relationships in most cases between parent and child, where appropriate. For example, extra efforts were made to bring the parent into the life of the child in school, and other relevant areas.

Area Needing Improvement

Goal Setting

- Case reviews revealed that in some cases the goal of reunification was not supported by information documented in the case file or obtained through interviews with the key individuals associated with the case. For example one child was returned home even though the parents were in opposition to the placement. In another case, the goal was reunification although no parent/child visits were occurring.

Status of Permanency Outcome P2 – Not in Substantial Conformity

80% of the records reviewed substantially achieved Permanency Outcome P2.

III. CHILD AND FAMILY WELL-BEING

Outcome WB1: Families have enhanced capacity to provide for their children's needs.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:					
Total Case Reviewed: 50		Total Cases to Which Outcome Applies: 50			
	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	17	16	5	38	76%
Partially Achieved:	2	3	4	9	18%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0	3	3	6%
Not Applicable:	0	0	0	0	

Item 17. Needs and services of child, parents, foster parents

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas has an array of services designed to meet the needs of children and families. However documentation was identified as a clear area needing improvement in the statewide assessment. This includes documentation on how parents are served, efforts to reintegrate children back into the family, visitation and outcomes and receipt of services.

The statewide assessment identified a need for ongoing training for SRS and contractor field staff regarding case planning, family systems and family-centered care. Other child welfare training issues were identified for SRS, contractor staff as well as for foster parents.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Case reviews revealed that thorough assessments were being completed. This was confirmed by the stakeholder interviews.

- Case reviews indicated that in most cases the major needs of parents, children and foster parents were addressed through appropriate services. In some cases extra efforts were being made to provide services that were outside the “normal” array of services for the identified problems.
- Stakeholders stated that the State is in the process of enhancing access to mental health services. This will begin with the SED children in October. The remaining mental health services will be rolled out in January 2002.
- According to stakeholders, the State has developed a Child Well-being status report. This is completed at six-month intervals to coincide with the case planning conference. The report tracks service needs and progress.

Area Needing Improvement

Delivery of mental health, substance abuse, and family focused services

- Stakeholders and case reviews indicated that once services were identified, the services were slow in being initiated.
- Stakeholders stated that there is a lack of respite care.
- Case reviews and stakeholders indicated that needs were not met for children with serious emotional disorders who had experienced multiple placements.
- Stakeholders identified a lack of intensive long-range services for children who were identified as SED and had substance abuse and/or mental health issues. This was confirmed through case reviews.
- Stakeholders state that there were waiting lists for some mental health and substance abuse services due to limited availability in two of the sites.
- Stakeholders stated that continuity of services is hampered by the contractual arrangement with the state. For example children that are involved in counseling prior to the agency’s intervention are not maintained with the same counselors/therapist.
- Stakeholders stated that the Family Preservation contractor decides who will receive the mental health services and the level of services for families involved through the contract. Occasionally this is restricted when the individual needs more services than authorized by the contractor.
- Stakeholders expressed concern about the support provided to some of the foster parents by their worker and the children’s worker.
- Some stakeholders stated that services to parents were not always being provided as identified. The focus tends to be on treatment for the child while excluding the parents’ issues. Family focused services were sometimes lacking.

Item 18. Child and family involvement in case planning

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

SRS policy stipulates that case planning conferences must be held within 180 days of a child coming into care. The contractor agency is required to submit a case plan to SRS within 20 days of a referral. SRS policy also stipulates that the child's family will be assisted in attending meetings when needed, that the child's family and the child (if age appropriate) are to be included in case planning. SRS policy dictates that case planning involve the process of monitoring, reassessing and documenting progress to make decisions regarding case disposition. Case planning occurs during the case planning conferences.

Basis: On-site review

Strengths

- Case reviews and stakeholders revealed that the majority of the families participate in the case planning process.
- Case reviews indicated that workers made an effort to conduct case planning meetings in the home of the parent.
- Case reviews indicated that in some instances case planning was rescheduled when the parents could not make it to the original planning meeting.
- Case reviews and stakeholders stated that most families receive timely notice of case planning meetings.
- Stakeholders stated that Tribal representatives are notified of the case planning conferences and were participating in the conferences.

Area Needing Improvement

Engaging parents in case planning process

- Stakeholders stated that staff needed training on engaging the parents and foster parents in the planning process. Parents are not always active participants in the planning process.

Item 19. Worker visits with child

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

SRS policy stipulates that in-person contact between the worker and child shall be at least once a month. Policy stipulates that this contact may also be made with a paraprofessional who is part of the child's case planning team. If the contractor is responsible for case planning, the contractor is responsible for worker/child visits.

If the child or parent with whom reintegration is the plan is located outside Kansas, but not located in the Kansas City Metropolitan Area, a request shall be made to the state in which the child or parent is located to carry out the required frequency of contact.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Case reviews indicated that in two review sites workers were consistently meeting or exceeding visitation requirements with the child.
- Case Reviews indicated that visitation schedules were based on the needs and goals of the child.

Area Needing Improvement

Worker visits with child

- Case reviews indicated that in one review site the workers were not making visits on all cases. They were relying on reports from schools and treatment facilities.
- Stakeholders stated that foster parents are not always notified when the worker visits the child outside the foster home.
- Case reviews and stakeholders revealed that when visits were not occurring it tended to be when cases were transitioning.

Item 20. Worker visits with parents

 X Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

SRS policy stipulates that an in-person contact between the worker and the parent with whom reintegration is the goal shall be at least monthly. Such contact may be with the child's worker or a paraprofessional who is part of the child's case planning team. If the case planning is the responsibility of the contractor, the contractor is responsible for the worker/parent contact. Frequency of contact may be modified for therapeutic reasons.

Basis: On-site Review

Strength

- Case reviews indicated that in two review sites, visits were consistently met or exceeded requirements.

Area Needing Improvement

Worker visits with parents

- Case reviews indicated that in one review site visits were not being made in all cases according to agency policy. The workers were relying on reports of parental progress from service providers.
- Case records and stakeholders indicated that when visits were not occurring it tended to be when cases were transitioning.

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB1 – Not in Substantial Conformity

76% of the records reviewed were substantially achieved for Child and Family Well-Being Outcome WB1

Outcome WB2: Children receive appropriate services to meet their educational needs.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:					
Total Cases Reviewed: 50			Total Cases to Which Outcome Applies: 44		
	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	11	18	12	41	93%
Partially Achieved:	1	0	0	1	2%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	2	0	0	2	5%
Not Applicable:	5	1	0	6	

Item 21. Educational needs of the child

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Available data from Settlement case monitoring indicates that SRS does a good job (88%) of incorporating educational needs of children in case planning.

SRS has recently developed and implemented a “Child Well-Being Status Report” that includes information concerning the child’s educational progress, needs and services.

The foster care contractor is responsible for ensuring that all eligible children are referred to SRS for the appointment of an Educational Advocate per KSA 38-1513a.

The foster care contractor is required to maintain contact with the child’s school either directly or via the placement source, in order to assure the child’s educational needs are adequately addressed.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Case reviews indicated that educational needs are being addressed.
- Stakeholders stated that educators are involved in community groups that address issues surrounding abuse/neglect.
- Stakeholders stated that SRS has collaborated with educators in developing protocols for reporting and investigating reports of child abuse and neglect. The schools work closely with SRS to provide training on issues of identification and reporting abuse and neglect.
- Stakeholders stated that SRS utilizes Early Child Care and Head Start in their educational and developmental services to children. In one review site, early Head Start has obtained a grant to worker with foster children, bringing the biological and foster parents together around the needs of the child.
- Stakeholders stated that the Department of Education in collaboration with SRS has initiated a database for all youth in foster care to assist with tracking foster children and providing timely and immediate information to the schools when a child enters a new school. This software will capture information about foster children and ensure credit accrual for course credit.
- Stakeholders stated that a form has been developed to capture information about the child's educational and social needs, school placement, and etc. that is given to the school when a child is enrolling in or transferring schools.
- Stakeholders in one review site provided the information that the alternative school was being widely used and highly thought of in the community. The last class graduated 12 students, including a 57-year-old gentleman. Children are asking to attend this school.
- Stakeholders stated that the state is supporting the work of the Youth Advisory Board in obtaining tuition waivers to allow youth to go to college or vocational school. SRS is empowering the Youth Advisory Board to talk to youth across the state to identify needs and recommended solutions to meeting the needs.
- Stakeholders stated that the State has arranged for youth to attend computer conferences to learn skills and earn a free computer and software for attendance at the conference.

Areas Needing Improvement

Multiple school placements

Case reviews revealed that in one area, there were instances in which children experience multiple school placements due to numerous moves in foster care.

IEP process

- Case reviews revealed that there is not a process in place that ensures that an IEP is implemented when a parent refuses to sign and the worker is not authorized to do so.

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB2 - In Substantial Conformity

93% of the records reviewed substantially achieved Child and Family Well-Being Outcome WB2.

Outcome WB3: Children receive adequate services to meet their physical and mental health needs.					
Number of cases reviewed by the team according to degree of outcome achievement:					
Total Cases Reviewed: 50		Total Cases to Which Outcome Applies: 46			
	Team 1	Team 2	Team 3	Total Number	Total Percentage
Substantially Achieved:	13	15	8	36	78%
Partially Achieved:	5	2	3	10	22%
Not Achieved or Addressed:	0	0	0	0	0
Not Applicable:	1	2	1	4	

Item 22. Physical health of the child

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Initial medical exams are required within 30 days of placement.

The foster care contractor is responsible for ensuring that all children receive KAN BE Healthy Screenings(EPSDT) and for ensuring that children with special needs are referred to the medicaid waiver services.

During a December 2000 case read, it was determined that the Kan Be Healthy (EPSDT) screening date on the medical card was current in 69% of the cases read. Child well-being and safety were documented and dates of Kan Be Healthy screenings could be found in some areas better than others. Services were provided in relation to health needs and educational needs were being addressed.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Case reviews indicated that in most cases initial medical exams were obtained timely for children in out-of-home cases.
- Case reviews indicated that medical issues were addressed in in-home cases even though this was not identified as a presenting problem.
- Case reviews revealed that Kan Be Healthy exams are conducted regularly.
- Case Reviews revealed that there is follow up on identified medical needs.

Area Needing Improvement

Medical services

- Stakeholders stated that there is a lack of dental care providers that accept Medicaid. There is not a provision for obtaining orthodontia care.
- Stakeholders stated that in some instances foster parents are not provided medical information about the child in a timely manner or not at all.

- Stakeholders stated that in some instances foster parents do not get reimbursement for mileage for taking children for medical treatment in a timely manner. Because the process is so cumbersome, some foster parents do not submit requests for reimbursement.

Item 23. Mental health of the child

☒ Strength ☐ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

The December 2000 case read indicated needed mental health services were identified in 93% of the case plans where the child's assessment would indicate mental health services were needed.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholders stated that there is a good working relationship and good communication between mental health and SRS in one review site.
- Case reviews revealed that overall basic mental health needs were identified in most cases as soon as the child came into custody through mental health screenings and evaluation.
- Stakeholder interviews indicated that the quality of available mental health services through the mental health centers was excellent.
- Stakeholders indicated that flexible funding is available for some mental health services.
- Stakeholders stated that SRS is taking a leadership role with their community partners to enhance mental health services to children and families.

Area Needing Improvement

Mental health and substance abuse resources, specialized placement resources, and service provision

- Case reviews and stakeholder interviews revealed a lack of therapeutic foster homes to meet the needs of the children with special needs.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that children are often removed from the home due to drug and alcohol abuse and lack of resources to treat the addictions while the children remain with the family. Parents are less likely to receive the needed treatment if they do not have private insurance that covers the treatment.
- Stakeholders stated that there is a lack of knowledge about drug and alcohol abuse. The system does not support identification of substance abuse issues as part of the reason that families come to the attention of SRS.
- Stakeholders stated that in some cases the identification of mental health needs of children was not being adequately assessed which resulted in children being hospitalized.
- Stakeholders indicated that mental health services provided are not always timely, of adequate duration, or at the appropriate level of intensity. These are usually the most costly services and are not being authorized, thereby, resulting in unstable placements, children remaining in care for extended periods of time and placement of children in restrictive placements.

Status of Well-Being Outcome WB3 - Not in Substantial Conformity

78% of the records reviewed substantially achieved Child and Family Well-Being Outcome WB3.

IV. STATEWIDE INFORMATION SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3XXXXX	4

Item 24. State is operating a Statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for the placement of every child who is (or within the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care.

__XXX__ Strength __ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas is operating a statewide information system, Family and Child Tracking System (FACTS), that has the capacity to readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location and goals for the placement of every child who is (or with the immediately preceding 12 months, has been) in foster care. The system also has the capacity to identify children served by child protective services, SRS family services and contracted family preservation services. This system is rich with data elements to assist managers and policy makers with business and decision-making responsibilities, requirements for AFCARS and requested submissions for the Summary DATA Component of NCANDS. Data are captured in 35 separate screens for intake, assessment, case planning, discreet service provisions and provider information.

Each family contractor maintains information and tracking systems of their own. The Department receives information from the contract agencies and from SRS contract monitors and managers by which to determine contractor performance on specified outcomes.

Although the system is data rich, the state recognizes that the system is fragmented. Activities have been underway to bring the FACTS information system to the point where the data can be validated as accurately reflecting case activity and status. Area offices, and private partners with whom the department contracts have developed their own paper base, local electronic file systems or their own individual data systems to meet their needs or needs regarding settlement performance. Kansas has not insisted on specific criteria from the contractors as long as they provide what is called for in their contracts. This has created difficulty in the exchange of data.

Area staff are using data to manage various aspects of their program, but what is managed, the sources of data used, and the programs used vary widely among offices. Access has historically been limited, however training is now underway in an effort to ensure that supervisors and workers are aware of the information that is available and the principle purposes for its existence.

The Family and Child Tracking System (FACTS) is the initial phase of a SACWIS compliant system. It comprises the basic case level information upon which development of case planning and reporting capabilities are being designed. Development is in progress to expand the array of standardized management reports. One of the newest system enhancements is the Kansas Initiative for Decision Support (KIDS), a structured assessment and decision-making tool for SRS staff.

Although the system has the capacity to generate data sets for several compliance-related needs, it has not yet developed routinely generated management information reports that would be useful to field staff. The “data warehouse” of information from the FACTS system can be accessed by field level staff, but only two management areas are known to utilize this process. Kansas recommends the development of a “culture” of data and believes that managers would benefit from training in the development and use of data.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholder interviews revealed that the state is operating a data rich statewide information system that, at a minimum, can readily identify the status, demographic characteristics, location, and goals for placement of every child who is in foster care.

- The system has the capacity to identify children served by child protective services, SRS family services and contracted Family Preservation according to the stakeholders.

Areas Needing Improvement

System Fragmentation

- Stakeholders state that the system is fragmented.
- Stakeholders state that workers and contractors are maintaining their own databases for management purposes that are not coordinated with or able to exchange information with the FACT system.

Usage, reports and training

- Stakeholders stated that the FACT system does not provided readily accessible management reports that assist the managers and workers. It is cumbersome to use and time consuming to obtain reports.
- Additional training for workers and supervisors is needed on the FACTS system according to stakeholders.

Status of Statewide Information System – In Substantial Conformity

V. CASE REVIEW SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3XXXXX	4

Item 25. Provides a process that ensures that each child has a written case plan to be developed jointly with the child's parent(s) that includes the required provisions.

XX Strength ____ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas has in place a system to provide that each child in foster care, under the state's placement and care responsibility, has a written case plan with all the required elements.

The foster care contractor is responsible for initiating case planning activities with a family within one week of referral. The original service plan is to be submitted to SRS within 20 calendar days of the referral. Within 170 days following the first service plan a case planning conference must be held and every 180 days thereafter.

Kansas has policy requirements that the parents and the child (where appropriate) be provided notice of case planning at least 10 days in advance and if the time is not convenient to negotiate an alternative. SRS monitors the notice requirement, but has not put in place a method of directly monitoring actual participation on an aggregate basis.

SRS policy dictates that case planning involve the process of monitoring, reassessing and documenting progress to make decisions regarding case disposition. Foster Care Contractors are required to comply with SRS Policy and use SRS approved forms for documentation. Service provision by the Foster Care contractor staff is driven not only by SRS policy, but also by the Requests for Proposal (RFP) for Foster Care and adoption. The contracts stipulate case planning requirements.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Case reviews revealed that case plans are in files.
- Stakeholders and case reviews indicated that parents are invited and attend case planning meetings.
- Case reviews revealed that in one review site, case planning meetings are rescheduled if the parents cannot attend.
- Stakeholders indicated that contractors are being monitored for adherence to case planning provisions.
- Case reviews revealed that generally contract and SRS workers attended and participated in the case planning conferences. Supervisors sometimes attended case planning conferences if the SRS workers could not attend the meeting. SRS staff received copies of the case-planning document if neither could attend. This was confirmed by stakeholder interviews.

Area Needing Improvement

Case planning: Child and parent participation and input

- Stakeholders stated that youth are not always notified of case planning meetings or are notified right before the conferences. Transportation to the meetings is not always available for the youth. Late notices to youth limit their capacity to make transportation arrangements.
- Stakeholders stated that parents do not always feel that their input is utilized in determining needs and services.

Item 26. Provides a process for the periodic review of the status of each child, no less frequently than once every 6 months, either by a court or by administrative review.

XXX Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas Statute (KKSA 38-1565) provides that the court shall receive written progress reports about that child from SRS at

least every six months. After the dispositional hearing, the court is required, by statute, to have a hearing no more than 12 months after the child has been removed from the child's home and at least every 12 months thereafter. SRS policy then follows Kansas Statute indicating that it is required that courts receive reports for children committed to the custody of the Secretary of SRS from SRS staff every six months. Each area office is charged with knowing when court reports are due to the court and for assuring that these are received by the court in a timely manner. Both SRS and private Contractors keep databases which contain information about when case plans are due for specific children. For the period July 1, 1999 through December 31, 1999 compliance was 96%.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Case reviews and stakeholder interviews indicate that courts are meeting and exceeding the 6-month requirement for case reviews.
- Stakeholders view case reviews as positive in moving children toward permanency.
- Stakeholders stated that the Kansas Supreme Court was instrumental in promoting the standardization of court orders to ensure compliance with AFSA and IV-E.

Area Needing Improvement

- None noted

Item 27. Provides a process that ensures that each child in foster care under the supervision of the State has a permanency hearing in a qualified court or administrative body no later than 12 months from the date the child entered foster care and no less frequently than every 12 months thereafter.

____ Strength __**XXX**__ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Whether or not a child has had a Permanency Hearing is tracked in the FACTS system, however the system does not track the date a Permanency Hearing is due. There are various methods employed at the area/local level to track permanency hearings. During 2000 the Office of Judicial Administration (OJA) conducted an internal, statewide review of the Judicial Branch for ASFA compliance. The final reviews were completed in January 2001 and the data was compiled. OJA is developing a Child in Care Information Management System that will have query capacity and will provide a tickler system for permanency hearings.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholders and case reviews indicate that it appears that permanency hearings are being conducted timely prior to TPR occurring in all sites.
- Stakeholders and case reviews indicate that in one review site permanency hearings are conducted after TPR has occurred.

Area Needing Improvement

Permanency hearing requirements and the agency's monitoring efforts related to this requirement

- Case reviews revealed that in one review site, permanency hearings are not usually held for children whose parental rights are terminated. This is primarily a paper review. The stakeholders confirmed this.
- Stakeholders indicate that in some review sites the agency is relying on the court to track when permanency hearings are due.

Item 28. Provides a process for termination of parental rights proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Adoption and Safe Families Act.

XXX Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

In 1998 the State incorporated the termination provisions of ASFA into the Kansas Code for Care of Children. The code provides that in a dispositional hearing the court shall determine whether reintegration is a viable alternative for the child. Court procedures are in place for filing a motion for termination of parental rights or a motion to establish a permanent guardianship within 30 days if the court finds reintegration is no longer a viable alternative.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholders stated that the courts are conscientious about filing termination of parental rights when a child has been in care 15 of 22 months. Case reviews confirmed this.
- Case reviews and Stakeholder interviews indicated that exceptions for terminating parental rights are used sparingly.

Area Needing Improvement

TPR exceptions

- Case reviews revealed that there is a need for improved documentation of exceptions to TPR in one review site.

Item 29. Provides a process for foster parents, preadoptive parents, and relative caregivers of children in foster care to be notified of, and have an opportunity to be heard in, any review or hearing held with respect to the child.

XXX Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas Statute (KSA 38-1565) dictates that SRS is to specifically notify foster parents of their duty to submit reports to the court every six months about the progress of children placed in the home of foster parents. SRS policy also dictates that this will occur although the responsibility for providing this notification has been delegated to the Foster Care and Adoption contractors. For the period January – March 2000 the State average was 48%.

SRS policy dictates that individuals concerned about a child in the custody of the Secretary of SRS, including the foster parents, relatives and pre-adoptive parents are invited to participate in the case planning conferences. When monitoring whether interested parties have been invited to case planning conference, SRS has included all parties together and has not monitored groups separately.

Kansas will initiate action to ensure that data are collected in the future regarding each specific group noted. Kansas is confident that interested individuals are invited and given an opportunity to attend case planning conferences and reviews and provide input.

Kansas acknowledges that there is difficulty in knowing how adequately each policy and procedure is being implemented statewide because the system data collection is fragmented and often does not contain the specific data. There are several small systems in place to meet various needs, but no system in place to inform the State as to what information is needed. Monitoring of the case review system is also fragmented. SRS is in the process of developing a review tool that can be utilized in all case reading.

Kansas has determined that the following areas need improvement:

- Data collection system.
- Implementation of a newly developed case plan tool.
- SRS and contractor staff's awareness of the necessity for timely case plans.
- Assurance that foster parents, pre-adoptive parents and relatives participate in the case planning process.
- Ongoing training of SRS and contractor staff.
- Staff awareness that permanency hearings for children are required and work with the courts to assure that these occur.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholder interviews and case reviews revealed that foster parents are invited to hearings.
- Stakeholder interviews stated that most foster parents provide the court written reports prior to the court hearings.

Area Needing Improvement

Foster parent input at hearings

- Stakeholders indicated that in some instances, foster parents do not feel that their input is valued relative to the decisions being made regarding children placed in their homes.

Status of Case Review System – In Substantial Conformity

VI. QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3XXXX	4

Item 30. The State has developed and implemented standards to ensure that children in foster care are provided quality services that protect the safety and health of the children.

XXX Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas' quality assurance process is a multi-tiered process that includes internal reviews and verification by the Legislative Division of Post Audit (LPA). Beginning in 1996 Kansas entered into contracts with private non- profit agencies for service delivery (family preservation, reintegration/foster care and adoption services). The contracts included outcomes to ensure the safety and permanency of children. These outcomes are monitored at both the local office and central office levels. Additional reviews are conducted by The University of Kansas School of Social Welfare and James Bell Associates (external review of contract outcomes and settlement agreement compliance). The Kansas Department of Health and Environment is responsible for the inspection process for compliance to regulations for foster and group home licensure. This includes health and safety.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholder interviews and case reviews revealed that policy is in place to ensure that children are receiving quality services.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that Kansas Department of Health and Environment has policy/regulations regarding foster home licensing and child placing/caring agencies and is responsible for licensing each of these entities.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that the State monitors and implements compliance with licensing standards with home visitation, criminal and background checks.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that criminal background and child abuse checks on foster homes are completed yearly.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that criminal and child abuse checks are completed on anyone in the household over 10 years of age.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that a process is in place to address complaints and develop corrective action plans targeted at identified problem areas.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that contractors are monitored monthly regarding contract compliance.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that supervisory visits are being conducted as required by policy to assure that children are safe in foster homes.

Area Needing Improvement

Foster home relicensure

- Stakeholder interviews revealed that contract staff are not formally trained to conduct the relicensing studies.
- Stakeholders indicated that due to staff turnover, staff may not be adequately trained to complete quality studies for the relicensure of foster homes.

Item 31. The State is operating an identifiable quality assurance system that is in place in the jurisdictions where the services included in the CFSP are provided, evaluates the quality of services, identifies strengths and needs of the service delivery system, provides relevant reports, and evaluates program improvement measures implemented.

____ Strength XXX Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

The SRS quality assurance process is a multi-tiered process incorporating many levels of oversight. These include SRS Internal Quality Assurance Monitoring Unit (IQAMU), Legislative Division of Post Audit (LPA), James Bell Associates, University of Kansas. The statewide assessment indicates that as of April 2000 there may be more parallel quality assurance systems than needed or productive. The agency is working on a comprehensive quality assurance process, which addresses duplication and is more efficient.

The statewide assessment identified the SRS social services culture as conflicting with the quality assurance process. A need was identified to help workers understand the importance of a balance between documentation and practice.

The statewide assessment indicates that contractual outcomes may need further definition with enforcement of corrective action for failure to perform. In addition, the need to re-evaluate standards and perhaps “raise the bar” has been identified, i.e., safety in foster care and number of moves.

Basis: On-Site

Strengths

- Stakeholder interviews revealed that there are multiple levels of monitoring throughout the state both internally and externally. Quality assurance was found to be as described in the statewide assessment.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that the State is in the process of developing a comprehensive quality assurance process that addresses duplication and is more efficient.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that the State is incorporating elements of the CFS process into their quality assurance system.

Area Needing Improvement

Fragmented, duplicative quality assurance

- Stakeholders stated that the quality assurance process is duplicative with many of the case review processes overlapping.

Status of Quality Assurance System – In Substantial Conformity

VII. TRAINING

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2XXXX	3	4

Item 32. The State is operating a staff development and training program that supports the goals and objectives in the CFSP, addresses services provided under titles IV-B and IV-E, and provides initial training for all staff who deliver these services.

____ Strength ____**XXX**_ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

All contractors and SRS offices conduct “in-house” new worker orientation and training. Training is provided within days of initial employment. Offerings are of various lengths and content are based upon the needs of the private agency or SRS area. Contractor orientation covers topics similar to the SRS training, as well as contract compliance issues. The field offices provide training focused on local policies, procedures and partnerships. All new SRS workers must also complete an interactive computer based training that covers pertinent topics in public child welfare.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholder interviews revealed that the State has hired an Education and Training Program Administrator for development, coordination, and implementation of statewide training for SRS and contract staff at all levels. This position will also serve as the agency’s coordinator for foster parent training issues.

- Stakeholder interviews revealed that the State is in the process of expanding initial and ongoing training for the SRS workers through a comprehensive statewide training academy.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that Investigators in one review site indicated that they were able to shadow experienced workers before being assigned cases. Staff found this on-the-job training to be helpful.

Area Needing Improvement

Initial training of staff

- Stakeholders indicated that initial training is insufficient to meet the needs of the workers and to support their duties and responsibilities. Contract workers are given one day of orientation with the remainder of the training being on-the-job. Little training is given to address the specific requirements of job responsibilities.
- Stakeholders indicated that there is not a comprehensive system for training which focuses on the needs of child welfare workers from entry level to advanced workers and supervisors.
- Stakeholders indicated that the workers felt they needed more practical, reality based training to enhance job performance, i.e. working with families affected by alcohol and drug abuse, court procedures, working with the varied cultural and ethnic groups.

Item 33. The State provides for ongoing training for staff that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to the services included in the CFSP.

____ Strength XXX Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas provides varied opportunities for local and statewide child welfare education and training. These opportunities are provided by SRS, public and private universities, child welfare contractors and partners and community organizations. Staff, however, expressed that they feel there are no training opportunities at all due to lack of a focused approach. They also recognize training/professional development opportunities, but do not feel there is support from the agency to pursue these opportunities.

All practicing social workers in Kansas are licensed by the State Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board and must complete 60 hours of continuing education credits every two years for re-licensing. SRS encourages staff participation in general child welfare training and professional development activities.

While a variety of opportunities exist, the statewide assessment indicates that there is currently not a comprehensive specifically on the comprehensive needs of child welfare workers. SRS developed a comprehensive statewide training academy, Kansas institute for Social Service Education and Development (KISSED), for staff in the child welfare system. This is a “master” training curriculum for both child welfare contract and SRS staff at all levels. KISSED addresses two items identified during the statewide assessment: lack of focused public child welfare and timely, accessible and consistent training.

SRS has created a new position, Education and Training Program Administrator. This position will have responsibility for development, coordination, and implementation of the KISSED model with other child welfare training and education. This position will also serve as the agency’s coordinator for foster parent training.

Basis: On-site Review

Strength

- Stakeholder interviews revealed that in one review site training needs have been identified. However it has been left to local staff to engage the community in developing training programs.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that cross training opportunities exist with the contract workers, SRS staff and Tribal workers. Cross training opportunities exist through the Children’s Alliance.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that staff is required to be licensed social workers. Therefore, they must have 60 hours of training every two years to maintain their license.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that the State collaborates with the University of Kansas to develop and provide training.
- The Children’s Alliance provides training which is available to workers, foster parents and other care providers. Some courses are available through the Internet.

Area Needing Improvement

On-going training

- Stakeholder interviews confirmed the statewide assessment that states that there is not a comprehensive training system, which focus specifically on the needs of entry level workers, advanced level workers and supervisors. The training does not prepare the workers to meet the demands of the more difficult areas of their jobs.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that training is fragmented. There is not a set curriculum for on-going training.
- Stakeholders indicated that the workers need conversational Spanish instruction to allow them to communicate with the growing Hispanic community.
- Stakeholders indicated that training in concurrent planning is needed.

Item 34. The State provides training for current or prospective foster parents, adoptive parents, and staff of State licensed or approved facilities that care for children receiving foster care or adoption assistance under title IV-E that addresses the skills and knowledge base needed to carry out their duties with regard to foster and adopted children.

XXX Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Foster and adoptive parents are required to complete the Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting (MAPP) program or “Deciding Together” before they can become licensed as a foster parent or approved as an adoptive parent. In addition 16 hours, per year, of continuing education is required after licensure. Since 1998 over 11,000 foster parents have completed MAPP. There were 1,426 foster parents who completed training in 2000. Ten percent of MAPP participants are surveyed monthly to ascertain training needs and quality of training provided.

Continuing education for foster parents is provided through member agency sponsorship of workshops on a variety of topics. Other sources of continuing education include self-directed projects, i.e., relevant television programs, reading research articles or books on selected topics, or attending special lectures or programs. There are also relevant educational programs offered by universities and community colleges.

According to the statewide assessment Kansas has difficulty in keeping documentation current and complete that the required training has been received. This is an issue identified in the lawsuit settlement agreement. SRS and Children's Rights, Inc. are considering how to improve the current method of keeping documentation.

The statewide assessment indicates that foster parents feel strongly that training should be offered in locations and at hours that are more easily accessible. Foster parents also expressed the need for more in depth training opportunities and resources covering specialized topics such as special needs children, relative placements, and adolescent issues.

The newly created Education and Training Administrator position will have responsibility for coordinating foster parent training issues.

Basis: On-site review

Strengths

- Stakeholder interviews confirmed that prospective foster/adoptive parents are receiving MAPP or "Deciding Together" training prior to initial licensure.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that therapeutic foster homes must have 40 hours of specialized training every year.
- Stakeholders indicated that there are many methods for obtaining training, i.e., distance learning, self-directed projects, college level classes, etc.

Area Needing Improvement

Foster parent training

- Stakeholders state that training is not always available at the times and places convenient for foster parents.
- Stakeholders interviews and case reviews revealed that foster parents do not receive training for special needs children, i.e. independent living, adolescence, SED, and etc.
- Some stakeholders stated that it would be good to have a refresher course on MAPP six months after having children placed in the home.

Status of Training – Not In Substantial Conformity

VIII. SERVICE ARRAY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3XXXX	4

Item 35. The State has in place an array of services that assess the strengths and needs of children and families and determine other service needs, address the needs of families in addition to individual children in order to create a safe home environment, enable children to remain safely with their parents when reasonable, and help children in foster and an adoptive placements achieve permanency.

 XXX Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas provides an array of services delivered directly by SRS field staff, by contractual agreements and grants. These services include intensive in-home services, reintegration and foster care services, adoption services, and other permanencies. In addition community mental health centers are available to every family in the state. Each of the tribal organizations receives a grant for social services that includes foster care, family services, family preservation, etc. Each of the three Tribes also receive a smaller grant to focus on specific family support services.

Representatives from the child welfare contractor agencies and the mental health centers have met in an effort to create a system that provides better mental health service delivery for children in SRS custody. These meetings are ongoing.

The statewide assessment indicates that there have been improvements since establishment of the SRS/Contractor Partnership. Improvements have been noted in the following areas: child/worker ratio, aftercare services, improved chances for success in achieving permanency for children in state custody, foster/adoptive parent training, timeliness of placements, and contractor accountability. There is an area of contract dispute that has resulted in delayed service

delivery in some instances. Changes in the contracts after the first four years led to a temporary lack of continuity and stability in some areas.

The statewide assessment indicates a need for more specialized services to treat problems specific to adoption and the continuing need for crisis intervention services. A need was also identified for a greater integration between child welfare and the substance abuse treatment system. Additional funding (slots) are needed to provide additional services to the at risk population through Child Care and Early Education.

Prevention/Early Intervention efforts have been enhanced through the use of flex funds and the capacity to prioritize funding for community services.

The statewide assessment indicates that family preservation services contractors are meeting or exceeding outcomes.

SRS is engaged in a variety of collaborative initiatives in an effort to improve services delivery, i.e., Mental Health 2000,

SRS is committed to permanency through adoption. The Department has contracted with a private child placing agency to maximize opportunities for placement. The contractor is expected to provide a full array of services.

SRS is aware of the importance of concurrent planning. SRS and select foster care contractors are collaborating with a private adoption agency to develop a model service delivery system based on the concepts of concurrent case planning.

Family foster homes are the most frequently used placement resource, but some children require more structured treatment-oriented settings in group homes and residential centers.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholders and case reviews indicated that there is a wide array of available services such as family preservation, community based services, the availability of flexible funding for services, partnership with law enforcement to conduct investigations, community mental health centers in all counties, partnership with head start and early head start programs.

- Stakeholders stated that the State is “carving out” mental health services for SED children through the Medicaid program beginning in October 2001. Post adoption mental health services will also be “carved” out at this time. This is to be expanded for other mental health services beginning in January 2002.

Area Needing Improvement

Staff and treatment resources

- Stakeholder interviews and case reviews indicated that drug and alcohol treatment services are needed in some areas.
- Stakeholders indicated that specialized mental health services are not readily available, i.e., mental health crisis beds.
- In one review site the stakeholders indicated that additional staff was needed to carry out investigative functions.

Item 36. The services in item 35 are accessible to families and children in all political jurisdictions covered in the State’s CFSP.

____ Strength XXX Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Family preservation and adoption subsidy are available throughout the state. There is a single statewide contract for adoption services. Mental health services are available through community mental health centers throughout the State.

The statewide assessment indicates that although SRS family services are available in all counties, many offices report difficulty in providing the level of services desirable due to reductions in staff and difficulty in recruiting and retaining social workers to fill authorized staffing levels.

The statewide assessment indicates that permanent guardianship subsidy is available throughout the state, however use is limited. The 1999 Legislature made a one time, fixed, allocation to support these subsidies. There were defects in the

statutes authorizing permanent guardianships and as a result many courts were reluctant or refused to approve guardianships. Some jurisdictions are now beginning to use existing law.

There are five independent living coordinators and one statewide coordinator in the State. Not all youth in all areas receive sufficient and timely services. SRS is assessing how independent living services for youth of all ages can be integrated into statewide programming.

The statewide assessment indicates that additional training is needed by staff to more effectively serve families whose children are at risk of placement. There is a lack of training and emphasis on working with families. According to the statewide assessment more training is also needed on “reasonable efforts” and other permanency topics.

Kansas identified that the system needs to emphasize the prevention of out-of-home placement ;develop more up-front services, including short term respite care; use flexible funding to provide needed services; fully staff statewide intake/investigation/assessment/referral services; develop well trained, confident staff; and provide concurrent/dual case planning training.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholder interviews revealed that some areas of the State are rich in service resources.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that Family Preservation and adoption services are available throughout the State.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that some mental health services are available through Community Mental Health centers throughout the State.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that permanent guardianship subsidy is available throughout the State.

Area Needing Improvement

Availability and accessibility of services

- Stakeholders indicated that Independent Living services are not available in all areas. Because these services are not available statewide, some youth are aging out of foster care without the benefit of receiving these services.

- Stakeholders identified that there are issues with transportation created by the distances that must be covered to obtain/deliver dental services, adolescent treatment, drug and alcohol inpatient treatment, etc.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that respite services and attendant care providers are not readily available in all areas.

Item 37. The services in item 35 can be individualized to meet the unique needs of children and families served by the agency.

XXX Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Case plans include at least one but no more than three Child Protection Objectives developed by SRS. These objectives may address parental behaviors, child behaviors or other objectives. These issues are discussed during case planning conferences. The written case plan for the child reflects services to meet the child's specific needs. Time lines for achievement of goals are also established. Case plans for families contain time lines for reintegration and measurable tasks to be accomplished. The child's family, the child (if age appropriate), SRS social worker and foster parent are included as a part of the case planning conference.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholders and case reviews revealed that services are generally individualized to meet the needs of children and families. Case plans were developed during meetings with family members and stakeholders involved in the cases. Everyone had a voice in determining services that are tailored to the individual family members' needs.

Area Needing Improvement

- None noted

Status of Service Array – In Substantial Conformity

IX. AGENCY RESPONSIVENESS TO THE COMMUNITY

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3	4XXXX

Item 38. In implementing the provisions of the CFSP, the State engages in ongoing consultation with tribal representatives, consumers, service providers, foster care providers, the juvenile court, and other public and private child- and family-serving agencies and includes the major concerns of these representatives in the goals and objectives of the CFSP.

 XXX Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas has made the involvement of community stakeholders a priority in the development of the state's plan for child welfare. SRS engages in on-going consultation with a broad array of individuals and organizations representing state and local agencies. SRS has a strong track record of collaborative efforts with both local and statewide partners. The agency receives feedback from external groups in the form of meeting notes, discussion of issues raised, requests of the agency, contract modifications and the reworking of agreements that are folded into the state plan process. This has resulted in numerous child welfare system improvements, i.e., renewed focus on wraparound mental health services, the formation of five regional foster/adoptive parents advisory councils, expanded criteria for referral to family preservation, etc.

Kansas values its relationship with the four Tribes (Sax and Fox, Prairie Band Potowatomi, Iowa of Kansas and Nebraska, and Kickapoo). SRS attends government to government meetings with tribal leadership. SRS has met at least annually with tribal leadership. The agenda for these meetings is built with input from tribal leadership, tribal social services, SRS leadership and area office staff. Meetings assist in assuring greater support for the Tribes' social service programs, particularly the child welfare activities. Program specific meetings between involved staff supplement the broad policies

established at the annual or bi-annual meetings and facilitate implementation of decisions made at those meetings. Memorandums of agreement have been negotiated with the Native American Nations with reservations or tribal lands in Kansas.

Each tribal organization receives a share of the State's Title IV-B funding to support family services and family preservation activities. Agreements are also in place for foster care activities performed by the tribal organizations which allows them access to Title IV-E funding to support these activities.

SRS hosted five public forums; one child advocates focus group and a multi-disciplinary work group for the purpose of examining Kansas laws, SRS regulations, policies and practices. Two primary recommendations resulted: training for SRS staff and other partners in the child welfare system and community education to enhance understanding of the system.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholders talked about the new leadership, vision and openness to collaboration they see within the system. SRS is held in high regard in the community.
- Stakeholders indicated that SRS reaches out to the Tribes to include them in decision making and plan development.
- Stakeholders indicated that the agency was responsive to the Tribes and gave notice when Native American children came into care.
- Stakeholders stated that transitioning of cases to the Tribe was timely.
- Stakeholders stated that Tribal representatives are always at the table during case planning.
- Stakeholders stated that when parental rights were terminated in a case, the case was automatically transferred to the Tribe.
- Stakeholders revealed that SRS is very active on multiple crosscutting committees and councils that address child welfare issues.
- Stakeholders stated that SRS works collaboratively with law enforcement, district attorneys, mental health, medical professionals, and the schools to protect children from maltreatment, both locally and on a statewide basis.

Area Needing Improvement

Response to cultural diversity

- Stakeholders indicated that staff needed assistance in working with different cultures although staff has received some training in this area.
- Stakeholders indicate that there is limited diversity of staff in mental health service providers, contract agencies, and SRS to work with the diverse client population.

Item 39. The agency develops, in consultation with these representatives, annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CFSP.

__XXX__ Strength ____ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas utilizes stakeholders listed in Item 38 in developing the 5-year CFSP and the Annual Progress and Services Report. Reports are issued by the Citizen Review Panels, CQI Council and James Bell & Associates, which are used in development of annual reports of progress and services delivered pursuant to the CRSP.

See Item 38 for additional information.

Currently SRS has grants of state general fund monies to support the four Native American Nations in providing child protection services, family services, foster reintegration/foster care and other social services. The agreements with Native American Family Services on behalf of the Iowa Tribe, the Sac and Fox Nation, and the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation describe the measures taken by the state to comply with ICWA, identification of Indian children by the State child welfare services agency, notice to Indian parents and Tribes of state proceedings involving any Indian child, placement of Indian children with a member of the child's extended family or child's tribe or other Indian families, and the use of tribal courts in child welfare matters. SRS also distributes Title IV-B monies to provide family services and family preservation.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholders indicated that stakeholder meetings, forums, and community town hall meetings are conducted across the State.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that SRS holds Government to Government meetings with Tribal representatives.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that consumer satisfactions surveys are conducted.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that staff is represented on a number of boards, coalitions, and committees.

Area Needing Improvement

- None noted

Item 40. The State's services under the CFSP are coordinated with services or benefits of other Federal or federally assisted programs serving the same population.

___**XXX**___ Strength ___ Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas has taken the lead in demonstrating leadership in coordinating services and programs to improve collaboration, decrease duplication, expand resources and improve effectiveness. The primary community collaboration is with the contractors that provide family preservation, foster care and adoption services in Kansas and their network of subcontracting child welfare service providers that form the public/private partnership in Kansas. SRS collaborates with a wide variety of State agencies including: KBI, University of Kansas, Community Mental Health Centers, Kansas Juvenile Justice Authority, Department of Education, Kansas Legal Services and Kansas Children's Cabinet.

Kansas has encouraged and funded community collaborations to serve children and families to prevent out-of-home placement in foster care, juvenile justice custody, or state hospitalization.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholder interviews confirmed the findings in the statewide assessment regarding collaboration with federally funded programs.
- Stakeholders stated that the agency has Memorandums of Understanding, and written protocol with other federally assisted programs.
- Stakeholders indicated that SRS staff is on various boards, and committees encompassing other federally assisted programs.
- Stakeholders indicated that SRS staff participated in cross training ventures.

Areas Needing Improvement

- None noted

Status of Agency Responsiveness to the Community – In Substantial Conformity

X. FOSTER AND ADOPTIVE PARENT LICENSING, RECRUITMENT, AND RETENTION

Rating of Review Team Regarding Substantial Conformity				
Rating	Not in Substantial Conformity		Substantial Conformity	
	1	2	3 XXXXX	4

Item 41. The State has implemented standards for foster family homes and child care institutions which are reasonably in accord with recommended national standards.

 XXX Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Kansas Statutes KSA 65-502 through KSA 65-516 established the legal authority of SRS and the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to regulate and license foster homes, group homes, and child care institutions. KSA 59-2213 sets forth the statutory elements of adoptions, including both agency and private placements. These standards are in accord with national standards. Licenses are non-expiring, but must be renewed annually.

Foster homes can be licensed for a maximum of four foster children or six children including the providers' own children under the age of 16. Special approval may be given for an additional two children if necessary to keep siblings together.

SRS also provides regulations for treatment of children placed in custody of the Secretary of SRS. The private contractors of foster care and adoption services carry out SRS policies. SRS has "Provider Agreements" with group care facilities, which mandate that these facilities are properly licensed and staff have appropriate hours of training and completion of criminal and Child Abuse and Neglect background clearances.

Basis: On-site Review

Strengths

- Stakeholder interviews revealed that the agency's licensing standards that cover all required areas, such as health and safety.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that the standards promote protection and permanency for children in out- of- home care.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that the agency has developed a Memorandum of Understanding and other protocols with the KDHE to complete foster home and child care institutional licensing and develop corrective action plans to promote health and safety of children in foster homes.

Area needing Improvement

Licensing requirements

- Stakeholders indicated that they would prefer that FBI criminal background checks be included in the screening and approval process.
- Stakeholders indicated that the KDHE regulations need to be revised to encompass the foster care regulations making them more effective.
- Stakeholders expressed the preference that KDHE complete all foster home relicensures. Additional staff would allow for this as well allowing KDHE to provide more support to foster parents.

Item 42. The standards are applied to all licensed or approved foster family homes or child care institutions receiving title IV- E or IV-B funds.

XXX Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

Licensing standards apply equally to all licensed/approved foster homes. Exceptions can be granted for specific reasons in the best interest of a child.

All foster and adoptive parents are required to complete the “Model Approach to Partnerships in Parenting” (MAPP) program or “Deciding Together” (if unable to attend training classes) before they can become licensed as a foster parent, take a child into their home, or become an approved adoptive parent. Foster parents are required to have an additional 16 hours of training per year after licensure.

Foster homes are recruited and studied by private contract agencies. Each contract describes how the agency will interface with KDHE and this ensures that all foster parents and facilities used for the out-of-home placement of children will meet the applicable state licensing laws.

Homes not receiving a foster care maintenance payment must be assessed and approved by social service staff as being environmentally and psychologically safe for children. These providers must also complete criminal background and Child Abuse Central Registry clearances even if no foster care maintenance payment is made.

Children residing with related providers or those homes caring for children over age 16 are required to be approved as meeting licensing requirements. This includes criminal background and Child Abuse Central Registry clearances and health department inspections for health and safety.

According to the statewide assessment SRS has difficulty in keeping documentation current and complete that required training has been received. The agency is considering how to improve the manner in which documentation is maintained.

Investigations of child abuse or neglect in licensed facilities are conducted by SRS in coordination with KDHE. The statewide assessment indicates that both SRS and KDHE field staff are confused about their roles in the investigation process. Investigations do take place and child safety remains paramount with staff from both agencies.

Basis: On-site Review

Strength

- Stakeholder interviews revealed that agency licensing standards reflect all required areas such as health and safety. The standards are equally applied to all licensed/approve homes and childcare institutions. This applies to both related and non-related homes.

Area needing Improvement

- None noted

Item 43. The State complies with Federal requirements for criminal background clearances as related to licensing or approving foster care and adoptive placements and has in place a case planning process that includes provisions for addressing the safety of foster care and adoptive placements for children.

 XXX Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

The Secretary of KDHE is obligated to complete criminal background clearances and Child Abuse Central Registry clearances on all persons caring for children in all regulated foster homes or child care facilities. Licenses are not issued or renewed for foster home facilities unless background clearances are completed. This requirement applies to any foster home household member age 10 or older. The statewide assessment indicates that SRS should institute criminal background investigations to be completed by the FBI.

Children residing with related providers or those homes caring for children over age 16 are required to be approved as meeting licensing requirements. This includes criminal background and Child Abuse Central Registry clearances and health department inspections for health and safety.

Kansas does not require licensing of adoptive parents. However, prospective adoptive parents must complete an intensive assessment process, criminal background and Child Abuse Central Registry clearance, and MAPP training. Children placed with unrelated prospective adoptive families, prior to the signing of the adoptive placement agreement, must be placed with families who are licensed as foster parents.

Contractors are required to provide a description of ongoing training and support services for foster families, which addresses the provision of supportive services for foster parents and relatives.

Basis: On-site Review

Strength

- Stakeholders indicated that the state has implemented provisions for criminal background clearances on all foster and adoptive families licensed or approved by the agency.

Area Needing Improvement

- None Noted

Item 44. The State has in place a process for ensuring the diligent recruitment of potential foster and adoptive families that reflect the ethnic and racial diversity of children in the State for whom foster and adoptive homes are needed.

____ Strength XXXX Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

The statewide assessment does not provide information about a State recruitment plan. Instead, this task is contracted From different agencies who are then responsible for training, recruitment and retention of foster and adoptive parents. The contract agencies provide SRS with their training plans. According to the statewide assessment these plans meet MEPA/IEPA standards.

The agencies are responsible for targeting foster and adoptive families who reflect the ethnic or racial diversity of the foster/adoptive population of children they serve. The statewide assessment indicates the contract agencies are exploring ways to target recruitment efforts in the States' ethnic communities. The statewide assessment also indicates that these agencies continue to develop and enhance efforts to gain cultural competency in recruitment of families. SRS recruits for placement resources for special populations, such as teenage children.

There were SRS foster parent recruitment initiatives in 1999 and 2000. Although these initiatives generated a number of inquiries there was no information provided in the statewide assessment as to the licensure outcomes.

SRS has not required the contract agencies to report data on recruitment or retention of racially and ethnically diverse foster and adoptive homes. It is unknown as to the effectiveness of their targeted recruitment efforts. The statewide assessment did not reflect a statewide plan or strategies for recruitment of foster homes.

The statewide assessment indicates that approximately 50% of the families adopting children in Kansas are the child's foster parent prior to institution of the adoption proceedings. Estimates are that 600 families are needed each year to replace foster parents who adopt children. Both the Adoption and Foster Care Contractors have an outcome goal of maintaining 85% of the children requiring out-of-home placement in a family setting. According to the statewide assessment, since July 2000, the foster care contractors are meeting this goal or are within two percentage points of meeting it.

The adoptive home recruitment effort is known as Coming Home Kansas. In the first three months of 2000, there were approximately 2,409 inquiries from Kansas families and approximately 649 inquiries from out-of-state families. The state has not required the contractors to report the number resulting in applications.

Basis: On-site review

Strengths

- Stakeholders indicated that the State has significantly increased the pool of available foster homes.
- Stakeholders identified the "Coming Home Kansas" initiative as a major effort to recruit foster/adoptive homes.

Area Needing Improvement

Recruitment of foster home resources to reflect the population of children in care

- Stakeholders stated that there is a shortage of foster/adoptive homes for adolescents and children with special needs. Support and training are not readily available for this group.
- Stakeholders in two review sites stated that they did not have enough homes to accommodate large sibling groups.
- Stakeholders stated that the State has not engaged in targeted recruitment for the varied population of children that present placement challenges. Stakeholders stated that on the surface the State has sufficient foster homes to place children. However, these available placements do not necessarily address the special needs of children needing placement.
- Stakeholder interviews revealed that SRS managers have little knowledge of recruitment activities that are taking place in their areas or throughout the State.

Item 45. The State has in place a process for the effective use of cross-jurisdictional resources to facilitate timely adoptive or permanent placements for waiting children.

 XXX Strength Area Needing Improvement

Basis: Statewide Assessment

The statewide adoption contractor recruits, and assesses prospective adoptive families as well as maintains a statewide database containing information on all prospective adoptive parents. The adoption contractor is responsible for maintaining a system which will fully interface with the National Resource Exchange /Faces of Adoption, internet exchanges utilized to access families for waiting children. SRS believes this is one method used to match children with waiting families in an expedited fashion. A federal grant was recently issued to improve the use of technology in matching children and families.

Basis: On-site reviewStrengths

- Stakeholders indicate that there is one contractor responsible for adoption services. This agency sub-contracts with other agencies. By having one contractor, inter-jurisdictional problems within the State are minimized.
- Stakeholders stated that children are listed on the National Adoption Exchange.

Area Needing Improvement*ICPC*

- One site was experiencing problems with ICPC studies and placements being completed timely.

Status of Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing, Recruitment, and Retention – In Substantial Conformity

XI. DETERMINATION OF SUBSTANTIAL CONFORMITY

For each outcome and systemic factor listed below, mark “**Y**” where the State is determined to be in substantial conformity and “**N**” where the State is determined not to be in substantial conformity. For each outcome or systemic factor marked “**N**,” place a check beside the performance indicator, listed by item number in this form, that has been determined to be an area needing improvement.

Safety

___N___ Outcome S1

___ Item 1
___ Item 2

___Y___ Outcome S2

___ Item 3
___ Item 4

Permanency

___N___ Outcome P1

___ Item 5
___ Item 6
___ Item 7
___ Item 8
___ Item 9
___ Item 10

___N___ Outcome P2

___ Item 11
___ Item 12
___ Item 13
___ Item 14
___ Item 15
___ Item 16

Child and Family Well-Being

___N___ Outcome WB1

___ Item 17
___ Item 18
___ Item 19
___ Item 20

___Y___ Outcome WB2

___ Item 21

___N___ Outcome WB3

___ Item 22
___ Item 23

Systemic Factors

___Y___ Statewide Information System

___ Item 24

___Y___ Case Review System

___ Item 25
___ Item 26
___X___ Item 27
___ Item 28
___ Item 29

___Y___ Quality Assurance System

___ Item 30
___X___ Item 31

___N___ Training

___X___ Item 32
___X___ Item 33
___ Item 34

___Y___ Service Array

___ Item 35
___X___ Item 36
___ Item 37

___Y___ Agency Responsiveness To The
Community

___ Item 38
___ Item 39
___ Item 40

___Y___ Foster and Adoptive Parent Licensing,
Recruitment, and Retention

___ Item 41
___ Item 42
___ Item 43
___X___ Item 44
___ Item 45